

BASE BRIEFS MORE VIOLATORS BREACH SURF

Three more violations occurred last weekend at Surf Beach, bringing the total to seven. The open-area boundaries are clearly marked and base officials will issue citations to people who enter closed areas. Normal beach hours are Friday through Monday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information regarding beach access or status, call the Beach Hotline at 606-6804.

WING NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The 30th Space Wing needs seven more volunteers to march in the Salute to the U.S. Air Force, Armed Forces Day Parade in Torrance, Calif., May 18. For more information or to volunteer, call Public Affairs at 606-3595.

ALS CLASS 02-D GRADUATES

Airman Leadership School Class 02-D graduates Wednesday at the Pacific Coast Club. A social hour begins at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Attire for the evening is mess dress or semi-formal. For more information, call 606-5595.

30TH SW FINANCE CHANGES HOURS

The 30th Space Wing Finance Office has changed customer service hours to Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

SIGN LANGUAGE EXPERTS NEEDED

The 30th Medical Group is looking for people experienced in sign language, who are willing to assist a physician during patient appointments. Call Lt. Col. Angela Thompson, chief nurse, at 606-3308 for information.

NEW ENGINEER TAKES COMMAND

Lt. Col. Douglas Tucker assumes command of the 30th Civil Engineer Squadron Thursday at 2 p.m. behind Bldg. 11442. For more information, call Tech. Sgt. Dee Wilson at 606-5601.

TOPS IN BLUE NEEDS PEOPLE

The Air Force Tops in Blue is looking for a bass guitar player, bus driver and truck driver. Participants must be active duty. For more information, call the Services Center at 605-8974.

WORK AT SERVICE STATION ENDS

Construction at the military service station is complete. The station is now open for refueling of authorized government vehicles. Refueling at the Fuels Ready Yard is terminated. Government vehicles are no longer authorized to gas at the AAFES. For more information, call Billie Ficklin at 606-8710.

See BRIEFS Page 4



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. LEE OSBERRY JR.

The Air Force Space Command wing mascots get set to rumble during opening ceremonies Monday for Guardian Challenge 2002. GC was held Sunday through Thursday here. More than 200 competitors battled it out to see who is the best of the best in AFSPC.

GC 2002 winds down Thursday

By STAFF SGT. ANDREW LEONHARD
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

Teams from throughout Air Force Space Command pack up their belongings today and head back to their home bases as the Air Force's premier space and missile competition concluded Thursday night.

The winners were announced at the GC banquet and awards presentation in the 76th Helicopter Flight hangar.

Guardian Challenge 2002 is in the history books after hours and days of grueling competition on the Central Coast. All the work each competitor, trainer, supervisor, co-worker and family member put forth the past few weeks has ended.

This year marked the 35th anniversary of the competition.

The competition featured about 200 competitors from AFSPC units participating in events to improve space procedures and operations.

Teams competed for the three

coveted trophies: the Blanchard, Aldridge and Schriever.

The Blanchard Trophy is named for former Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. William Blanchard. It is presented to the best space intercontinental ballistic missile wing team.

The Aldridge Trophy, named after the 16th Secretary of the Air Force Edward "Pete" Aldridge Jr., is for the best space operations wing team.

The Schriever Trophy is named after Lt. Gen. Bernard Schriever, the former commander of the western development division. The Schriever Trophy is awarded to the best spacelift wing team.

"This has been a spirited and challenging competition," said Col. Robert M. Worley II, 30th Space Wing commander.

"Seeing the excellence in our young competitors makes me even more proud to be part of this great command and this great Air Force," he said.

Rattler fangs GC competitor during tactical event Monday

By MASTER SGT. TY FOSTER
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

One of Team V's Guardian Challenge 2002 competitors was hospitalized after a snake bit him during a portion of the security forces competition here Monday.

Staff Sgt. Terry Hutchens, 30th Security Forces Squadron, was part of a five-man team playing out a tactical scenario when the rattler struck him on his left hip.

Fellow GC teammate Staff Sgt. Mike Hayes said Hutchens had just been taken out by aggressor forces. Hutchens stood up and was taking off his helmet when he sat down -- apparently on the snake.

Senior Airman Ed Braly, a 30th Communications

See SNAKE Page 4

Delta II blasts off

By 2ND LT. MICHELLE MAYO
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

Team Vandenberg successfully launched a Boeing Delta II rocket carrying a NASA imaging satellite from Space Launch Complex-2 here at 2:55 a.m. Saturday.

This was the second Delta II launched from Vandenberg this year. The year's first Delta II took to the skies Feb. 11.

The 30th Space Wing launch team provided critical launch and tracking services to help ensure public safety and mission assurance.

To do this, they operated tracking, telem-

etry, safety, communication and commanding systems to monitor the rocket during launch and to make sure it stayed on its proper flight path.

"The launch was a superb effort by the Team Vandenberg launch crew," said Col. Richard Strathearn, vice commander of the 30th Space Wing and the spacelift commander for the launch.

"It was a very smooth countdown and we were able to get the launch off at the beginning of the 10-minute window, successfully placing the Aqua spacecraft in its proper orbit," he said.

"My congratulations go out to all who contributed to this important and successful launch,"

Strathearn added.

The Delta II payload delivery options range from about 1,980 pounds to 5.8 metric tons, depending on which orbit the rocket is delivering to.

For this launch, the Delta II delivered the 6,248-pound NASA Aqua Earth-observing satellite PM to low-Earth orbit.

Aqua, named for the Latin word for water, is designed to gather information about the effect of climate change on the Earth's water cycle during a six-year mission.

Every 16 days, the satellite will fly in an orbit that spans the globe in order to provide a six-year chronology of the planet and its processes.

Aqua's mission is to collect data on evaporation from the oceans, water vapor in the atmosphere, clouds, precipitation, soil moisture, sea ice, land ice and snow cover on land and ice.

Comprehensive measurements taken by its onboard instruments will allow scientists to assess long-term change, identify its human and natural causes. Data will also be useful in long-term weather forecasting and in monitoring severe storms.

Maj. Gen. Hamel takes command of 14th AF

By STAFF SGT. ANDREW LEONHARD
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

A career space professional took command of the 14th Air Force in a formal change-of-command ceremony at the parade grounds here May 3.

Maj. Gen. Michael Hamel, former chief of the director of space operations and integration, deputy chief of staff for Air and Space Operations, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., succeeds Lt. Gen. Bill "Tunes" Looney who moves on to be the commander of the Electronic Systems Center at Hanscom AFB, Mass.

"Mike Hamel epitomized space professional, before we coined the word," said Gen. Ed Eberhart, commander in chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Space Command, and Department of Defense Manager for Manned Space Flight Support Operations, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

Hamel's career is exclusively space and missile. He began his career in 1972 as a staff development planner, Space and Missile Systems Organization, Los Angeles AFB, Calif. The general's first commanding position was in 1994 with the 750th Space Group, Onizuka Air Station, Calif.

Between 1972 and 1994, Hamel spent time in Colorado, Washington D.C. and Los Angeles doing jobs such as missile analyst, mission director, air staff training of-



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. RACHEL ZINK

Maj. Gen. Michael Hamel (right) takes command of the 14th Air Force in a change of command ceremony at the parade grounds Friday.

ficer and chief of plans Divisions at Peterson.

"It's truly an honor to be commanding such an outstanding unit as the 14th Air Force," Hamel said during the ceremony. "The 14th has an incredible and proud heritage, the biggest achievements and the brightest future."

Air Force wings undergo major reorganization

By TECH. SGT. SCOTT ELLIOTT
Air Force Print News

The way Air Force wings are organized will undergo major changes beginning Oct. 1.

Those changes include creation of a new maintenance group, restructuring support groups and reducing the taskings of operations groups. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper directed April 22 that all Air Force active-duty, Reserve and Air National Guard wings adopt the new standard wing structure to enhance the service's warfighting capabilities.

"After careful deliberations with major command commanders, we reached a decision on a new wing organizational structure that standardizes operations across the Air Force and enhances our expeditionary capabilities," Jumper said.

The five major changes involved in the standard wing concept include:

- All aircraft and space maintenance specialists currently assigned to operations and logistics groups will be reassigned to a newly created maintenance group.

- Supply and transportation squadrons will be combined to form logistics readiness squadrons.

- Contracting squadrons, aerial ports and logistics readiness

squadrons will transfer into existing support groups, which will be renamed "mission support group."

- Logistics plans functions will transfer to the newly created logistics readiness squadrons.

- The logistics readiness officer career field initiative, which combines three officer career fields - supply, transportation and logistics plans - has new accessions beginning this month.

"My vision is that the groups in our wings will focus on their essential core capabilities," General Jumper said.

"Operation of air and space weapons systems is a core competency of the U.S. Air Force," General Jumper said. "Operations group activities focus on planning and executing air and space power. Commanders of operations groups are charged with leading their units in combat.

"They will continue to be considered leaders and role models in the tactical employment of their weapons systems," he said.

"The Air Force has also recognized the emerging necessity to more closely integrate tactical skills with execution at the operational level of war. Commanders of operations groups will be increasingly involved in planning

See FORCE Page 4

Peacekeeper launches Wednesday morning

By 2ND LT. MICHELLE MAYO
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

While the rest of Vandenberg kept their eyes on Guardian Challenge, members of the 30th Space Wing and the 576th Flight Test Squadron were busy preparing for a May 15 launch of an unarmed Peacekeeper missile.

The Peacekeeper's launch window is from 1:01 a.m. to 7:01 a.m. Wednesday morning.

It heads to a target in the Kwajalein Missile Range about 4,800 miles away.

The missile is the newest in the Air Force's arsenal, but slated for deactivation in the next several

years.

The House Armed Services Committee voted to eliminate 50 Peacekeeper missiles from the U.S. strategic arsenal last August.

The amendment to eliminate the Peacekeeper missiles supports a pledge by President George Bush to draw down the U.S. nuclear arsenal of more than 7,000 warheads.

Each Peacekeeper, developed in the 1980s, carries up to 10 nuclear warheads.

The Air Force successfully conducted the first test flight of the Peacekeeper June 17, 1983, from Vandenberg.

In this issue of the



Also view The Space & Missile Times at
http://www.vandenberg.af.mil/30sw/news/space_times/index.html



Warmer weather brings out the "bite" in Team V. Awareness is key around snakes. See Page 4.



On call 24/7. Team Vandenberg combat camera members deploy to Sarajevo. See Page 5.

Weekend forecast
Morning low clouds and fog with afternoon sun.

Low/High
43/65

For a full VAFB weather report visit
www.vandenberg.af.mil/30sw/organizations/30og/weather/weather/index.html

What were they thinking?

By MASTER SGT. TY FOSTER
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

Driving down the road, a 25-year-old airman first class lost control of his motorcycle while he was negotiating a curve. What was he thinking in that final split second before he struck a utility pole and died?

Less than a month later, a 27-year-old senior airman lost control of his motorcycle while in a turn. What was he thinking right before he died?

Nine days later, a 22-year-old senior airman fired up his bike after he'd had a few drinks, his passenger settled onto the back seat and they took off for the ride of their lives. While passing two cars, they struck a left turning vehicle. The driver, now permanently disabled, was lucky. The passenger died. What were they thinking the moment before the high-speed impact crushed their bodies?

Three lives lost, one permanently and dramatically changed – that's only one quarter of the Air Force's 12 motorcycle fatalities since Oct. 1.

Last year, nine of our own lost their lives in motorcycle mishaps.

Each of the dead and maimed failed to use a critical piece of safety equipment.

If they had, they would have attended an Air Force-approved motorcycle safety training course.

If they'd already attended the course, they would have applied the mental street riding strategies and physical skills they'd learned

to avoid their deaths.

They'd have known the most common accident site for motorcyclists is at intersections with cars turning left in front of them.

They would have known that even one drink of alcohol seriously impairs one's judgment and coordination – critical factors when driving a motorcycle.

If they were novice riders, they would have recognized the limits of their experience and been more conservative riders until they gained skill through practice.

If they were experienced riders, they would have known the key to negotiating a turn successfully is to look where they wanted to go – not at what they ultimately hit – and press on the motorcycle's handgrip in the direction of the turn.

They'd have known they were more vulnerable on a motorcycle – a fact which they paid the ultimate price to learn.

What was that critical piece of equipment? A Department of Transportation approved helmet? No. Impact resistant goggles or helmet faceshield? No. Full-fingered gloves? No. Long-sleeved shirt, pants, over-the-ankle footwear? No. That all-so-favorite reflective vest, right? No.

If the current trend of Air Force motorcycle fatalities stays on pace, there are still about a dozen of us who won't make it to the holiday season this year if we don't use this critical piece of equipment.

We all have it and use it – albeit to varying degrees.

It's our brain – use it or lose it.

Commander's Action line



Col. Robert M. Worley II
Commander,
30th Space Wing

Mission success is our top priority, and the talented men and women of Team Vandenberg get it done with excellence.

Key to the effectiveness of any great team is good communication. The 30th Space Wing Commander's Action Line is your direct communication link to me.

It provides an avenue for you to voice your concerns, share constructive ideas, or give your Vandenberg teammates a pat on the back. I appreciate your input, and I am personally involved in every response.

While the Commander's Action Line is a great way to communicate, don't forget there are many other avenues to get answers to your questions including your chain of command, first sergeants, base services officials and other base professionals.

Thanks for helping to make Vandenberg such a great place to work and live. When calling the action line, please leave your name and phone number in case more information is needed. Call the action line at 606-7850 or e-mail actionline@vandenberg.af.mil.

Quick Reference Phone Numbers

EMERGENCY.....	911
Command Post.....	606-9961
Poison control.....	800-876-4766
Clinic appointments.....	606-2273
Information.....	411
After-hours urgent care.....	888-252-3299
TRICARE services.....	800-242-6788
Health Care Information Line.....	800-611-2883
Pharmacy Assistance	606-7440
Pharmacy Refill (recording)	605-0200
Law enforcement.....	606-3911
Housing maintenance.....	734-5586
Child Development Center.....	606-1555
Youth Center	606-2152
MPF customer service.....	606-7756
Visitor control center.....	606-7662
Military Pay.....	606-4606
Civilian Pay	606-1851
Airman's Attic.....	605-5484
Golf Course	606-6262
Fitness Center	606-3832
Health and Wellness Center.....	606-2221
Dry Cleaners	606-5111
Pacific Coast Club	734-4375
Arts and Crafts Center	606-6438
Retiree Activities Office.....	606-5474
Chaplain	606-5773

Riding gear gives motorcyclists extra measure of protection

■ While an alert mind and sound street riding strategies are essential for motorcycle operators, good riding gear is equally important.

Department of Defense Instruction 6055.4 and Air Force Instruction 91-207 outline mandatory protective equipment for base motorcycle riders.

Helmets must be certified to meet Department of Transportation, Snell Memorial or American National Standards Institute standards, and be properly fastened under the chin. “Beanie” helmets do not fulfill DOT safety requirements and are not authorized.

Eye protection must be impact- or shatter-resistant goggles, or full-face shield, properly attached to the helmet. Eyeglasses alone are not proper eye protection, nor are the motorcycle's windshield, unless the windshield is equal to or higher than the height of the operator's helmet, when sitting in an upright position.

Sturdy footwear is mandatory. Leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes are strongly recommended.

Protective clothing: Long trousers and a long-sleeved shirt or jacket must be worn while operating or riding on a motorcycle. Additionally, a brightly colored, outer upper garment must be worn during daytime rides and a reflective upper garment must be worn at night. These must be clearly visible and not covered by backpacks or similar accessories.

Gloves: Riders and their passengers will wear full-fingered gloves that are designed for use on a motorcycle.



Heard a rumor? Get the facts!

During crises or emergencies, call the
Vandenberg rumor control line at 606-1857.



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Questions regarding the paper can be directed to the *Space & Missile Times* staff at (805) 606-2040.

Take off, eh ...



PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CANDICE ANGLIN

The world-renowned Canadian Forces Snowbirds aerobatic team prepare to take to the Central Coast skies during a visit here Wednesday. About 400 people gathered on the flightline to enjoy the show. Vandenberg is one of the sites the Snowbirds are considering as a pre-airshow season practice site. If the Central Coast meets their standard, the team will roost here for two weeks every two years starting next year.

76th Helicopter Flight commander lands top award

By 2ND LT. MICHELLE MAYO
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

■ The former 14th Air Force commander recognized the 76th Helicopter Flight commander as Flight Commander of the Year May 1.

Maj. Gen. Bill Looney presented the award to Maj. Bruce Hellen.

“Hellen has brought this unit from a high level of performance to a stellar level in a very short time,” said Col. Mark Owen, 30th Operations Group commander.

Hellen administers the unit’s 1,400 flying-hour program and manages a \$2 million budget that supports maintenance, contract and operations for five UH-1N helicopters. He is an instructor and evaluator pilot with over 3,800 flight hours in helicopters.

The 76th HF is the most diversely qualified light-lift helicopter unit in the Air Force, according to Maj. William Thomas, 76th HF director of operations.

“The 76th conducts helicopter flight operations supporting the 30th Space Wing, to include security, surveillance and aerial photography for operational spacelift and

76TH GAINS NEW COMMANDER

■ Maj. William Thomas takes command of the 76th Helicopter Flight from Maj. Bruce Hellen in the helicopter hangar Monday at 10 a.m.

Col. Mark Owen, 30th Operations Group commander, invites all base people to attend the change of command ceremony.

Hellen heads to the Defense Contract Management Agency in Boston.

missile test launch activities and NASA Space Shuttle operations,” Thomas said.

The unit also provides aerial fire suppression, movement of cargo and personnel, medical alert coverage and supports the National Search and Rescue Plan.

Three teams from the 76th HF participated in a recovery mission

in Sequoia National Park last month.

“The fact that Hellen has nailed this award with so much on his plate is just amazing,” Owen said. “His unit has won every possible award that a helicopter unit can.”

Additionally, it was Hellen’s leadership that “was directly responsible for his unit receiving the ‘Best Helicopter Flight’ during Guardian Challenge 2001,” Thomas said.

The GC 2002 helicopter team will compete in only one of three events this year due to an Air Force-wide stand down of the UH-1N helicopter.

Hellen said he was disappointed that the team won’t be able to participate in all the events they trained for.

“I’m confident they will excel in whatever competition they participate in,” he said.

Hellen said he received this honor because of the hard work of everyone in his unit.

“It’s a classic case of gifted and talented people making their boss look good,” he said.

‘101 Critical Days of Summer’ kicks off early

By 2ND LT. MICHELLE MAYO
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

■ Due to an inordinately high number of alcohol-related deaths this fiscal year, Air Force Space Command kicked off the 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign a month early.

The campaign, which normally begins Memorial Day, began May 1. The 2002 campaign is now the 124 Critical Days of Summer.

“The straw that broke the camel’s back was the two fatalities during the last weekend of April,” said Flo Pangelinan, Ground Safety Manager for the 30th Space Wing Ground Safety Office. Pangelinan was referring to the alcohol-related deaths of two young airmen that fateful, fatal weekend.

An airman first class from F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., died that Friday from injuries sustained in an alcohol-related crash. The next day, another airman first class stationed at Minot AFB, N.D., died after falling through a plate glass window.

This brings the number of alcohol-related deaths in Space Command to 4.

“The facts are clear to me: We are not doing all we can to prevent alcohol-related accidents,” said Gen. Lance Lord, AFSPC commander following the recent mishaps.

And now, the Air Force is headed into what is traditionally the most dangerous time of the year for airmen – the summer months.

As summer approaches and the temperature rises, so too does the death toll.

In fiscal year 2001, the summer months accounted for 32 percent of all deaths. June is the leading month for Air Force fatalities.

The number of accidents increases because more people participate in outdoor recreational sports and take long drives for vacations or moves.

There have already been 48 deaths this year in the Air Force, with the most dangerous months still ahead.

In an effort to prevent mishaps before they have a chance to occur, AFSPC Vice Commander Lt. Gen. Robert Hinson ordered each wing to come up with five safety

initiatives.

The 30th SW Safety Office came up with nine.

The wing will conduct seatbelt checks throughout the summer, increase publicity and public awareness, conduct a drinking and driving prevention campaign, hold a health fair, conduct boating classes and inspections and display wrecked vehicles throughout the base. Col. Robert M. Worley II, 30th Space Wing commander, will hold mass safety briefings May 21.

The final initiative is a “101 Critical Days of Summer Slogan Contest.”

“With this campaign, we’re hoping that people will take the idea of safety seriously,” Pangelinan said. “We want them to internalize the message that we care about them and their safety.”

It is also about personal responsibility, said Senior Master Sgt. Cliff Tebbe, 14th Air Force Safety Superintendent.

“People need to be responsible for their own safety -- that extends to your buddies,” Tebbe said.

“We need to start taking care of each other,” he said.



PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CANDICE ANGLIN

Lockheed Martin Astronautics employees offload the last Titan IV booster from a C-5 Galaxy May 2 here. Vandenberg’s final Titan IV launch is slated for 2003.

Team V hails Lockheed’s top employees during annual banquet

By MAGGI DAANE
Lockheed Martin Astronautics

■ Lockheed Martin Astronautics Vandenberg launch operations honored its “best of the best” at its annual Launch Operations Exceptional Achievement Awards banquet at the Rancho Santa Barbara Marriott in Buellton last month.

The banquet recognized the top two percent of Team Vandenberg’s more than 500 Lockheed launch operations employees.

According to Thomas Heter, the achievement awards are a peer nominated process, whereby employees nominate colleagues based on their outstanding signifi-

cant and sustained performance within various support organizations or directly on the Titan, Atlas, Athena, or Multi-Service Launch System launch programs.

As the LMA’s director of launch operations here, Heter was part of the local management team that selected this year’s winners from the 56 nominations.

Dorothy Jones was named as the LOEAA 2001 Employee of the Year. Jones, a senior environmental engineer, was recognized for her proactive involvement in industrial wastewater management.

She has garnered many accolades from the Air Force and for her efforts in managing environ-

mental issues.

“I felt like the Belle of the ball when they announced my name,” Jones said. “I’m very honored and humble to be recognized.”

Also honored for their very special and significant achievements during 2001 were Perry Carroll, Mark DeDera, Robert Dodds, Robert Drick, Gary Fike, Mary Harvey, David Johnson, Kary Policht, William Redd, Kirk Troeger and Robert Wade.

LMA Vandenberg Launch Operations is responsible for the processing of Athena, Atlas, MSLS, and Titan launch vehicles for a variety of commercial and government customers.

Team Vandenberg Spotlight

Name: Staff Sgt. Mike Myers
Assignment: 534th Training Squadron, Satellite Operations Instructor
Hometown: Schuylkill Haven, Penn.

Time on Vandenberg: 3 years
Time in Air Force: 9 years

Why he loves his job: “Molding future space operators is a challenging and rewarding experience. Everyone should try an instructor tour of duty during their careers.”

Supervisor’s Comments: “Staff Sgt. Myers is a true professional,” said Tech. Sgt. Patrick Yomes, NCO in charge of the Satellite Training Flight, 534th Training Squadron. “As an instructor he is personally responsible for molding the future of Air Force Space Command by producing top-of-the-line Space Warriors. In a squadron full of superior airmen, Staff Sgt. Mike Myers stands tall as one of the finest.”



PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CANDICE ANGLIN

Check out our on-line news at www.vandenberg.af.mil/30sw/news

Team V members have received 30 DUIs since July! Two people have died as a result of their actions!



DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE
Call
Airmen Against Drunk Driving
at 698-8822 or 698-8823 for a free ride home.

Single parents support each other over lunch

BY STAFF SGT. REBECCA BONILLA
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

This day starts the night before as he stands in the kitchen at 10 o'clock packing lunches for tomorrow. The boys are tucked tightly in their beds, so now he can concentrate on all the chores he left undone while he played Nintendo and crashed his Hot Wheels.

Once lunch is ready, he throws a load of jeans and uniforms in the wash then heads to the kitchen and loads the dishwasher.

He cracks open his PFE and studies until the clothes are ready for the dryer. Then he shakes out his uniform and irons it.

As the clock chimes midnight, he falls into bed at last, already checking off in his mind, the list of things to do tomorrow.

While the story of the man above is only an example of what single parents can go through, many of the parents at the Single Parents Lunch Support Group said they can relate to such a night.

It seems there are never quite enough hours in the day for parents to get completely caught up. For single parents, it can be doubly difficult. With no one to share the load and no one to lend an empathetic ear, the days and weeks ahead can loom like

decades. Linda Bastine, family and work life consultant, and Nancy Sias, Family Advocacy nurse specialist, are co-founders of the support group, which helps single parents give each other an objective ear and a much-needed pat on the back.

They meet at 11 a.m. the second and fourth Tuesday of each month in the Pacific Coast Club. The group is open to single parents who are on active-duty or retired as well as to civilian employees.

"Many single parents have attended the parenting classes offered on base often said they'd like to see a group that specifically addresses the needs of single parents," Bastine said.

"Our focus is on adult health," Sias said. "We need to make sure our moms and dads are taking care of themselves so they can, in turn, take care of their little ones."

Along with encouraging self-care for parents, the group discusses the different ages and stages children go through.

"I couldn't figure out why my 9-year-old seemed to grow up over night," said Staff Sgt. Bill Greene, 533rd Training Squadron. "He took over the role of being a second parent to my three-year-old before I realized it.

"I brought it up at the lunch

and it turns out that older children in a divorce often tend to take on a lot more responsibility," Greene said. "Now I make it a point to make sure he gets to do kid things like roller blading at the new skate park."

Single parenting can make a person feel they have to do it all on their own, Bastine said.

"I think the idea of a 'support group' can put people off who would really benefit from the friendships and contacts that are made in this group," Greene said. "I made the mistake of passing on the name of my best babysitter and now she's always busy!"

"When I first heard about the group, I thought it would just be a bunch of singles looking for dates," said Staff Sgt. Kerry Onaka, 30th Mission Support Squadron. "I was also worried about people thinking I couldn't handle things on my own. But that's not the case. It's really nice to be with other people who know where you're coming from as a parent. Linda and Nancy give you another way of looking at parenting issues without making you feel like you haven't done enough already."

The group has had a lasting effect on some of its members. Three have moved on to other bases and are now starting up groups at their new homes.

Ssss... Awareness is key with rattlesnakes

BY MASTER SGT. TY FOSTER
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

When the weather warms up on the Central Coast, more people venture outside to enjoy the great outdoors.

As the temperatures rise, Vandenberg's rattlesnake population emerges from its winter hibernation.

Senior Airman John Smith, 30th Security Forces Squadron Fish and Game section, said they began seeing them in late March.

"Rattlesnakes are the only venomous snakes on Vandenberg, but all snakes will bite if they feel threatened," said Nancy Francine, 30th Civil

Engineer Squadron wildlife biologist.

"Most snake bites are because people didn't see the snake," she said. "It's a matter of being aware when you are walking outside — especially in tall grass or off a trail. People should listen for the warning rattle."

Francine said rattlesnakes are not aggressive. "If you leave them alone, they'll leave you alone," she said. When bitten by a

rattler, the victim should seek immediate medical attention, Smith said.

"Don't run and try not to panic," he said. That causes the heart rate to increase thereby causing the venom to spread throughout the body faster.

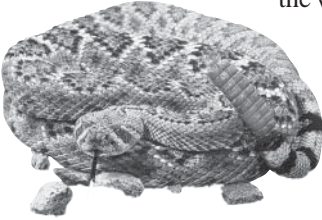


PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN EDWARD BRALY
Staff Sgt. Terry Hutchens, 30th Security Forces Squadron, displays his "battle wounds." Hutchens was bitten by a rattlesnake Monday during Guardian Challenge.

SNAKE: Team members can't find snake, paramedics respond

from Page 1
Squadron photographer, was nearby when Hutchens said, "I think I just got bit by a snake."

Braly used his camera's zoom lens to get a close-up look at the wound and confirmed it appeared to be a snake bite.

"I stood up because I heard 'life-saver,'" said Senior Airman Shay

Nakaahiki, another of Hutchens' security forces teammates. "Life-saver" was the code word competitors were told to use if a real-world, life-threatening situation arose.

Hayes said his teammates joined him to try to find the snake. Paramedics arrived on scene near the Santa Ynez River south of the

base Rod and Gun Club.

At that time, paramedics took Hutchens to the Lompoc Hospital where he was observed for symptoms of rattlesnake poisoning. When they determined he'd been poisoned, he was transported to Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara where he remained until Thursday when he was released.



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. MARIA LORENTE

Tech. Sgt. James Monk (left) and Master Sgt. Scott Wagers walk away from a helicopter landing pad at Sarajevo's Camp Butmir. Monk and Wagers are members of the 30th Communications Squadron.

16th AEW's Sarajevo combat camera airmen in thick of things

BY CAPT. REGI WINCHESTER
16th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

■ Air Force videographers and photographers are the professionals who capture the operations, exercises and day-to-day life of the military on film.

Those who work for Combat Camera are a select few of that group.

Aerial photographers are an even smaller group.

These individuals go through extra training, such as the aircrew water-survival training course, to be able to take video and photos while in flight.

Sarajevo's Combat Camera unit has two aerial photographers, Master Sgt. Scott Wagers and Tech. Sgt. James Monk.

Wagers and Monk are on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

They cover everything from distinguished visitor arrivals to leaflet drops. They also cover a wide range of Stabilization Forces operations, including counter-terrorism operations designed to stem the flow of illegal weapons trade.

According to Wagers, this deployment to Sarajevo is as good as it gets for being involved in a variety of operations.

"We're able to provide people with critical imagery. We're the ones telling the story - we're the eyes of the Air Force over here," said Wagers.

According to Wagers, the mission is worthwhile, even given the constraints the crew is under. Down to four people, two fliers and two non-fliers, the staff is kept very busy meeting the demands of their customers.

"The job is very interesting and that's what keeps us going. There's

a real sense of mission and you really understand how our imagery contributes to that mission," he said.

This is Wagers' second deployment to Camp Butmir. He was here two years ago with the first formal Aerospace Expeditionary Forces rotation in Sarajevo. Then, his job was to provide the SFOR commander with a dedicated photographer.

Now, Lorente fills that position. "While I worked for COMSFOR, I got the chance to see most of the country," said Wagers. "It really gave me a frame of reference for how things work in this NATO environment. That was a real benefit when it came to deploying here again."

From the last deployment to this one, it seems to Wagers that the office has maintained its mission, and remains involved with a vast range of SFOR operations.

"We get involved with everything," said Wagers. "We document the Joint Resolve exercises, most other NATO exercises here and real-world operations as well."

He recounted that one of his first experiences here brought home the importance of the SFOR mission and how dangerous it can be.

"My first job was with an Irish demining team. We went out to a local house, which had been mostly demined. I shot stuff that was to be used for training future demining teams," he said.

"Realizing that the house wasn't totally clear and that I was right there really made me almost painfully aware that the danger isn't just on some foreign hillside - it's right here, just outside the gate," Wagers added.

Monk, currently on his first deployment, said his thoughts on the mission mirror Wagers'.

"Combat Camera really gets to participate in missions the way we're intended to here," said Monk. "I've been here for a month, and I've already seen that this is an incredible opportunity to use the tools we have for the benefit of NATO operations."

"We have the tools and the means to convey information to people who make important decisions. It's a privilege to be part of that, and a pretty cool job," he said.

"I've done a lot of work with CJSOTF (Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force), shooting aerial video of different areas, and done everything from document press conferences with COMSFOR to filming the visit of the Portugese president," Monk said.

Monk and Wagers related that Combat Camera also spends a lot of time providing documentation of International Police Task Force operations -- not only filming but taking part in events like U.S. Army infiltration and extraction training.

This infiltration and extraction exercise involves being clipped to and hanging from a 120-foot rope dangling from a helicopter. As the helicopter rises, it lifts the soldiers up and carries them away.

According to Monk, who filmed and took part in the exercise, the "ride" attached to the rope was amazingly smooth.

"That was the closest thing to being Superman," said Monk. "We definitely get in some strange places in this job."

FORCE: Date for wing reorganization is Sept. 30, 2003

from Page 1
and training for the operational level of war.

"Maintenance of air and space weapons systems is (also) a core competency of the U.S. Air Force," Jumper said. "Aging fleets and years of resource shortfalls require increased attention to the balance of sortie production and health of our fleets. This requires career maintenance professionals able to develop the same level of skill and proficiency demanded of our operations, logistics and medical professionals."

"Mission support, in the expeditionary, rapid reaction, contingency-based Air Force of today is (another) core competency," he said. "The Air Force will develop a career path for commanders who understand the full scope of home station employment and

sustainment, and deployment, beddown and sustainment at contingency locations: crisis actions, force protection, unit type code preparation, load planning, contracting actions, bare base and tent city preparation, munitions site planning, personnel readiness expeditionary combat support, etc."

Medical groups, the general said, will continue to focus on maintaining a fit and ready force. There will be no change to the structure of medical groups.

Jumper set Sept. 30, 2003, as the target date to achieve full operational capability.

"I fully understand the magnitude of these changes," he said. "The goal is to achieve a more capable Air Force with professionals who understand and are capable of meeting our ever-increasing complex mission."

BRIEFS: Fire season is here, family practice clinic closed

from Page 1

FIRE RISK HEIGHTENS

The fire danger rating signs are now at "Moderate," meaning conditions are right for fires. People need to be cautious while traveling off road and on secondary roads. It's mandatory that vehicles traveling on unimproved secondary roads have a shovel and fire extinguisher. For information, call Mark Smith at 606-2965.

FAMILY PRACTICE CLOSED TODAY

The 30th Medical Group's Family Practice Clinic is closed today, for an official function. The Internal Medicine and GYN Clinics' will remain open along with the pharmacy, immunizations, and other support services. If a need for emergent care arises go to the nearest emergency room. If urgent care needs arise call (888)252-3299.

INTRAMURAL BASKETBALL
OVERALL STANDINGS



American League:		W - L	Pct.
1.	30 th Security Forces Squadron No. 2	16 - 2	.888
2.	30 th Civil Engineer Squadron No. 1	16 - 2	.888
3.	576 th Flight test Squadron No. 1	15 - 3	.833
4.	30 th SFS No. 4	10 - 8	.555
5.	30 th Operations Group No. 1	9 - 9	.500
6.	30 th CES No. 3	7 - 11	.388
7.	30 th Communication Squadron	7 - 11	.388
8.	30 th Transportation Squadron	5 - 13	.277
9.	30 th Medical Group	3 - 15	.166
10.	30 th SFS No. 3	3 - 15	.166

National League:		W - L	Pct.
1.	381 st Training Group No. 2	15 - 2	.833
2.	30 th Mission Support Squadron	14 - 3	.777
3.	381 st TRG No. 1	13 - 4	.722
4.	533 rd Training Squadron	10 - 7	.555
5.	14 th Air Force	10 - 7	.555
6.	576 th FLTS No. 2	6 - 11	.333
7.	SFS No. 1	5 - 12	.277
8.	Detachment 9	5 - 12	.277
9.	30 th CES No. 2	5 - 12	.277
10.	30 th OG No. 2	3 - 14	.166

Standings as of Monday

Playoffs begin Monday with Championship game May 17. All games are at the Vandenberg Fitness Center. 30th SFS No.2 vs. 533rd TRG Monday at 5:30 p.m. 576th FLTS vs. 30th MSS 6:30 p.m. 30th CES No.1 vs. 381st TRG No.1 7:30 p.m. 30th SFS No.4 vs. 381st TRG No.2 8:30 p.m. Championship Game: 17 May 2002, 6 p.m.

SPORTS BRIEFS

The Vandenberg Women's Soccer Team needs players. The team plays in the Central Coast Women's Soccer Association League and is open to all women over the age of 18 years. Interested players should call Capt. Ann Curtis at 606-2382 for further details.

The Varsity Soccer Team is looking to add a few more committed and talented players to its roster. The team practices Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the base field.

League games are Sundays. If interested, call Scott Vincent at 605-0755.

The Diana Youth Softball Booster Club needs board members. Those interested should call the Youth Center at 606-9374 or Kari Rosson at 734-1028.

The Ten Star All Star Summer Basketball Camp is accepting applications from children ages 10 to 19. The camp nearest to Vandenberg is in Thousand Oaks, Calif. For a free brochure, call (704) 568-6801.

Want to see more sports in your

SPACE & MISSILE TIMES

Tell us what your team's up to! Submit stories and ideas to: space&missiletimes@vandenberg.af.mil

Youth major league
player hurls one-hitter

By STAFF SGT. ADALBERTO VELEZ
533rd Training Squadron

A no-hit game for the Giants was spoiled in the bottom of the 6th inning during the 8-3 victory over the always scrappy Yankees May 4.

With only one out to go, Yankees slugger, Ricky Jenkins, ripped a line drive to center field. But Jenkins was subsequently cut down in a bang-bang play while attempting to advance to second base.

Gavon Byrd, one of many versatile Giants players, lit up opponents for 14 strike-outs to capture the victory. One of the Giants' dedicated fans exclaimed, "He's on fire."

The Giants were subsequently shut down by "Locked and Loaded" Yankee pitcher, Chi Chi Rivera in the latter half of the game. The Giants only scored two additional runs off 3 hits during the final three innings. The rocket throw from Diego

Velez, Giants' towering center fielder, to ace shortstop, Jimmy Vlahos, ended the game.

"It was one of those games where everything fell into place," Coach Byrd said. "Gavon just gave the Yankees something to hit and, unfortunately for them, the Yankees had a bad day and the results fell in our favor."

Offensive firepower sealed the Giants' victory. All totaled, they garnered 12 hits and 6 runs in the first three innings of the game. Giants lead off batter Roman Rapp led the charge going two for three with one RBI. He also scored two runs. Other Giant star players rounding out the Giants attack included Carlos and Diego Velez, Jimmy Vlahos, Logan Brandt, Daniel Tisdale, Curt Rossen, Spencer Reed, Nick Jones, JC Sink, and Brittney Bair (Injured Reserve).

Team Vandenberg is invited to attend youth sports baseball and softball games every weekday at 5 p.m. and various times every Saturday.



AF people will
benefit from new
tuition policy

■ WASHINGTON— Air Force people soon will benefit from a new Department of Defense tuition assistance policy that pays 100 percent of the cost of tuition for off-duty courses, according to Air Force education officials.

"The policy, effective Oct. 1, 2002, will pay tuition costs and mandatory fees for up to a maximum of \$250 per semester hour, or \$750 per 3-hour course," said Jim Sweizer, chief of the Air Force voluntary education branch at the Pentagon. The policy also includes a \$4,500-per-year tuition assistance ceiling.

With 100 percent tuition assistance available to airmen, some people might opt to waive contributing to the Montgomery GI Bill, Sweizer said. He recommends bluesuiters continue to take advantage of the benefits the GI Bill presents.

The increase to 100 percent tuition assistance was authorized by Congress two years ago but was not funded until fiscal 2003. The tuition assistance program is the same across the entire Defense Department. Each service had two years to develop a plan to make the programs work together.

For more information regarding the new tuition assistance policy, contact local education centers. (Courtesy Air Force News Print)

AF announces
Thrift Savings
Plan season

■ RANDOLPH AFB, Texas — Civilian and military employees can enroll or change their contributions during the Thrift Savings Plan's "open season" May 15 to July 31.

"TSP is an easy, long-term retirement savings plan, that everyone should consider," said Lt. Col. David Zeh, Air Force Personnel Center's contact center chief here. "It's a great supplement to military and civilian retirement plans, and you only contribute what you feel you want to."

TSP offers investors the chance

for lower taxes each year they contribute because they don't have to pay taxes on earnings until reaching retirement age.

"Other features of the plan include a choice of five investment options, and an easy way to move your money between those options," said Janet Thomas, of the center's civilian benefits and entitlements service team.

The investment money can be paid directly out of each paycheck so people never have to think about it, said Zeh.

"That makes it so easy to 'pay yourself first,'" he said.

"Employees already contributing to TSP area encouraged to review their TSP plan and account balances," said Thomas.

The five TSP funds are: Government Securities Investment (G) Fund; Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund; Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund; Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund; and International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

Specific information is available for civilian employees from the Thrift Savings Web site at <http://www.tsp.gov/> or the BEST home page at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/menu.htm> and for Air Force military personnel at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift_savings_plan.htm. (Courtesy of Air Force News Service)

Taxpayers can
avoid late fees,
penalties

By STAFF SGT. A.J. BOSKER
Air Force Print News

■ WASHINGTON — Air Force people can avoid the stress of dealing with late fees and penalties by knowing the rules governing military taxpayers and their rights as members of the armed forces, according to Internal Revenue Service officials.

Every taxpayer, civilian or military, should know the normal deadline for filing their tax return is April 15, said Don Roberts, IRS spokesman. However, many do not know payment for any taxes they owe is also due by the same deadline.

"Anyone who did not file their

return and pay their taxes by April 15 will be charged interest on the unpaid tax and receive a failure-to-pay penalty," said Capt. Jennifer Hyzer, chief of the taxation law branch at the Air Force Legal Services Agency. "In addition, the IRS can also impose a failure-to-file penalty."

If a taxpayer has not filed his or her return yet and did not request an extension before April 15, the taxpayer should file immediately, said Hyzer.

The interest on the overdue tax is compounded daily and computed from the due date of the return until the payment is made. The interest, adjusted quarterly, is currently at six percent. The combined penalties, both failure to file and failure to pay, is 5 percent for each month or partial month that a return is late, up to 25 percent.

Air Force people stationed or deployed overseas on April 15 have an automatic extension until June 15 to file their taxes but still must pay any due tax or be charged interested on the amount not paid by April 15.

To take advantage of this, military taxpayers must attach a statement to their return showing they satisfy the extension requirements.

"However, the deadline for filing tax returns, paying taxes and filing claims for refund is automatically extended if you serve in the armed forces in a combat zone, qualifying hazardous duty area or have qualifying service outside of a combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area," Roberts said.

"If any Air Force (people are) unsure whether they qualify for an exemption or extension or have any other tax-related questions, they should go to their local legal office for assistance," Hyzer said. "We can help people find the answers they need and eliminate an unnecessary source of stress for our deployed airmen."

Fitness program
focuses on
healthy lifestyle

By RAY JOHNSON

Air Force Services Agency Public Affairs

■ SAN ANTONIO — Since the days of Roman legionnaires, militaries have realized the importance

Welcome home, daddy!



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. THOMAS J. SOBczyk JR.

Tech. Sgt. Kelly Lawrence, from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing, is welcomed home by his daughter upon returning from Operation Enduring Freedom.

of having physically fit troops.

Staying in shape takes commitment, and for some people, just getting started and remaining motivated to work out can be the most difficult part.

Therefore, even more emphasis is being placed on the Air Force's Mission Fitness program, known in past years as May Fitness Month.

"Mission Fitness represents the ongoing efforts of our fitness centers to help people make healthy lifestyle choices, to make physical conditioning a daily part of their life," said Maj. Mason Pigue, fitness and sports branch chief for the Air Force Services Agency.

As part of the program, every base will hold special events throughout May, along with a worldwide 5k road race being planned for

Armed Forces Week.

Base fitness centers will collect the stamp cards, which must have at least 20 earned points, and forward them to AFSVA for a grand prize drawing in June.

"Mission Fitness is a great opportunity for Air Force fitness centers to provide maximum exposure for their activities," said Master Sgt. Gene Bell, AFSVA's fitness and sports branch superintendent. "Plus it truly enhances esprit de corps among the Air Force family."

Although the promotional program lasts for one month, services

officials hope it creates a mindset that lasts much longer.

"Obviously, being physically fit is critical for those who serve in the military," Pigue said. "Sometimes, though, it's a lot easier to exercise in a relaxed and rewarding environment, which Mission Fitness provides. And once people learn that their workouts can be just as fun as those experienced during the program, we believe they will make fitness a part of their daily life."

Editor's Note: For these news stories and more, check out the website www.af.mil.